

Remarks

The Office Action mailed July 3, 2006, and made final, has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment has been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 3-13, 15-21, 23-37, 39-45, and 47-48 are now pending in this application. Claims 1-8, 11-13, 16, 18-23, 25-33, 36, 37, and 40-46 stand rejected. Claims 47 and 48 have been allowed. Claims 9, 10, 14, 15, 24, 34, 35, 38 and 39 are objected to but are indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 1-2, 14, 22, 38, and 46 have been cancelled.

Applicants acknowledge that Claims 47 and 48 have been allowed, and that Claims 9, 10, 14, 15, 24, 34, 35, 38 and 39 contain allowable subject matter as found by the Examiner in the Office Action.

The present amendment is intended to place the application in condition for allowance by (i) amending the dependency of Claims 3-13 and 15-20 to depend, directly or indirectly, from allowed Claim 47, and (ii) incorporating allowed subject matter into independent Claims 21, 26, and 45, namely amending Claims 21, 26, and 45 to include certain recitations of allowed independent Claim 47. Applicants submit that independent Claims 21, 26, and 45, and all claims depending therefrom are now in condition for allowance.

In addition, Claims 1-2, 14, 22, 38, and 46 have been cancelled. Applicants wish to emphasize that the cancellation of Claims 1-2, 14, 22, 38, and 46 is without prejudice, and expressly reserve the right to file a continuation application or applications for further prosecution of the subject matter contained in these claims. Accordingly, Applicants expressly disavow any intention to surrender the subject matter of Claims 1-2, 14, 22, 38, and 46 by cancellation in the instant application, and reserve the right to prosecute these claims in future applications.

The rejection of Claims 1-8, 11-13, 16, 18-23, 25-33, 36, 37, and 40-46 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kosiba et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,098,052) ("Kosiba") is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1-2 have been cancelled. Claims 3-13 and 15-20 have been amended to depend, directly or indirectly, from allowed independent Claim 47. Accordingly, Claims 3-13 and 15-20 are respectfully submitted to be patentable over Kosiba.

Claim 21 has been amended to included recitations from allowed independent Claim 47. Accordingly, Claim 21 is patentable over Kosiba.

Claim 22 has been cancelled. When the recitations of dependent Claims 23 and 25 are considered in combination with the recitations of independent Claim 21, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent Claims 23 and 25 are also patentable over Kosiba.

Claim 26 has been amended to included recitations from allowed independent Claim 47. Accordingly, Claim 26 is patentable over Kosiba.

Claim 38 has been cancelled. When the recitations of dependent Claims 27-33, 36, 37, and 40-44 are considered in combination with the recitations of independent Claim 26, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent Claims 27-33, 36, 37, and 40-44 are also patentable over Kosiba.


Claim 45 has been amended to included recitations from allowed independent Claim 47. Accordingly, Claim 45 is patentable over Kosiba.

Claim 46 has been cancelled.

For at least the reasons as set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection of Claims 1-8, 11-13, 16, 18-23, 25-33, 36, 37, and 40-46 be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



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